IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

identifying first overlap information regarding where at least two digital images overlap at a first resolution level;

purging memory, subsequent to said identifying, of the at least two digital images at the first resolution level;

~~dividing~~retrieving, subsequent to said purging, ~~each~~ overlapping areas of the at least two digital images ~~into a plurality of areas~~ at a second resolution level higher than the first resolution level based on the first overlap information; and

identifying second overlap information regarding where overlapping ones of the retrieved overlapping areas overlap at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each of the at least two digital images are stored at the first and second resolution levels.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~method~~ retrieving comprises:

~~storing~~dividing each of the at least two digital images into a plurality of areas at the ~~first~~ second resolution level ~~in memory to identify where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level~~; and

storing the plurality of ~~overlapping~~ areas at the second resolution level in the memory to identify where the plurality of ~~overlapping~~ areas overlap at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~.

4.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level and the identifying where overlapping ones of the areas at the second resolution level overlap each comprise using an edge detection technique to identify the first and second overlap information.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying the first overlap information regarding where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level comprises identifying coordinates where the at least two digital images at the first resolution level ~~overlap~~; and

wherein the ~~identifying where~~ retrieving the overlapping ~~ones of the~~ areas of the at least two digital images at the second resolution level overlap comprises ~~identifying~~loading the overlapping areas based on the identified coordinates.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, comprising:
combining the at least two digital images.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, comprising:
identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at one or more resolution levels higher than the second resolution level.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising:
identifying further, first overlap information regarding where another set of at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level; ·
dividing each image retrieving overlapping areas of the other set of at least two digital images into a plurality of areas at the second resolution level based on the further, first overlap information;
identifying further, second overlap information regarding where overlapping ones of the retrieved overlapping areas overlap of the other set of at least two digital images at the second resolution level overlap; and
combining the digital images.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having instructions that, when executed by a computer, perform a method comprising:
identifying first overlap information regarding where at least two digital images overlap at a first resolution level;
purging memory, subsequent to said identifying, of the at least two digital images at the first resolution level;
dividing retrieving, subsequent to said purging, each overlapping areas of the at least two digital images into a plurality of areas at a second resolution level higher than the first resolution level based on the first overlap information; and
identifying second overlap information regarding where overlapping ones of the retrieved overlapping areas overlap at the second resolution level overlap.

10. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein each of the at least two digital images are stored at the first and second resolution levels

11.　(Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the ~~method~~ retrieving comprises:

　　~~storing~~ dividing the at least two digital images into a plurality of areas at the ~~first~~ second resolution level ~~in memory to identify where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level~~; and

　　storing the ~~overlapping~~ plurality of areas at the second resolution level in ~~the~~ memory to identify where the plurality of ~~overlapping~~ areas overlap at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~.

12.　(Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level and the identifying where overlapping ones of the areas at the second resolution level overlap each comprise using an edge detection technique to identify the first and second overlap information.

13.　(Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the identifying first overlap information regarding where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level comprises identifying coordinates where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level ~~overlap~~; and

　　wherein the ~~identifying where~~ retrieving the overlapping ~~ones of the~~ areas of the at least two digital images at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~ comprises ~~identifying~~ loading the overlapping areas based on the identified coordinates.

14.　(Original) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the method comprises combining the at least two digital images.

15.　(Original) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the method comprises identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at one or more resolution levels higher than the second resolution level.

16.　(Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the method comprises:

　　identifying further, first overlap information regarding where another set of at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level;

　　~~dividing each image~~ retrieving overlapping areas of the other set of at least two digital images ~~into a plurality of areas~~ at the second resolution level based on the further, first overlap information;

identifying <u>further, second overlap information regarding</u> where overlapping ones of the retrieved <u>overlapping</u> areas of the other set of at least two digital images <u>overlap</u> at the second resolution level~~overlap~~; and

combining the digital images.

17.   (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:

(a)   one or more processors; and

(b)   a computer readable medium to store instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, perform:

(i)   identifying <u>first overlap information regarding</u> where at least two digital images overlap at a first resolution level,

(ii)   purging memory, subsequent to said identifying, of the at least two digital images at the first resolution level;

(iii)   ~~dividing~~<u>retrieving</u>, subsequent to said purging, ~~each~~<u>overlapping areas</u> of the at least two digital images ~~into a plurality of areas~~ at a second resolution level higher than the first resolution level <u>based on the first overlap information,</u> and

(iv)   identifying <u>second overlap information regarding</u> where overlapping ones of the retrieved <u>overlapping</u> areas <u>overlap</u> at the second resolution level~~overlap~~.

18.   (Original) The computer system of claim 17, comprising a computer readable medium to store each of the at least two digital images at the first and second resolution levels.

19.   (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 17, ~~comprising memory, the computer readable medium to store instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, perform~~<u>wherein retrieving comprises</u>:

~~storing~~<u>dividing each of</u> the at least two digital images <u>into a plurality of areas</u> at the ~~first~~ <u>second</u> resolution level~~in the memory to identify where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level~~, and

storing the <u>plurality of</u> ~~overlapping~~areas at the second resolution level in ~~the~~ memory to identify where the <u>plurality of</u> ~~overlapping~~areas <u>overlap</u> at the second resolution level~~overlap~~.

20.   (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 17, wherein the identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level and the identifying where overlapping ones of the areas at the second resolution level overlap each comprise using an edge detection technique <u>to identify the first and second overlap information</u>.

21.   (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 17, wherein the identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level comprises identifying coordinates where the at least two digital images at the first resolution level overlap; and

wherein the ~~identifying where~~ retrieving the overlapping ~~ones~~ areas of the ~~areas~~ at least two digital images at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~ comprises ~~identifying~~ loading the overlapping areas based on the identified coordinates.

22.   (Original) The computer system of claim 17, the computer readable medium to store instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, perform combining the at least two digital images.

23.   (Original) The computer system of claim 17, the computer readable medium to store instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, perform identifying where the at least two digital images overlap at one or more resolution levels higher than the second resolution level.

24.   (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 17, the computer readable medium to store instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, perform:

identifying further, first overlap information regarding where another set of at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level,

purging memory, subsequent to said identifying, of the at least two digital images at the first resolution level;

~~dividing each image of the other set~~ retrieving, subsequent to said purging, overlapping areas of at least two digital images ~~into a plurality of areas~~ at the second resolution level based on the further, first overlap information;~~,~~

identifying further, second overlap information regarding where overlapping ones of the retrieved overlapping areas of the other set of at least two digital images overlap at the second resolution level ~~overlap, and~~

~~combining the digital images~~.

25.   (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:

means for identifying first overlap information regarding where at least two digital images overlap at a first resolution level;

means for purging memory, subsequent to said identifying, of the at least two digital images at the first resolution level;

means for ~~dividing~~retrieving, subsequent to said purging, ~~each~~ overlapping areas of the at least two digital images ~~into a plurality of areas~~ at a second resolution level higher than the first resolution level based on the first overlap information; and

means for identifying second overlap information regarding where overlapping ones of the retrieved overlapping areas overlap at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 25, comprising:

means for ~~storing~~ dividing the at least two digital images into a plurality of areas at the ~~first~~ second resolution level ~~in memory to identify where the at least two digital images overlap at the first resolution level~~; and

means for storing the plurality of ~~overlapping~~ areas at the second resolution level in the memory to identify where the plurality of ~~overlapping~~ areas overlap at the second resolution level ~~overlap~~.

27. (Original) The computer system of claim 25, comprising:

means for combining the at least two digital images.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~dividing~~ retrieving further comprises dividing each of the at least two digital images at the second resolution level into a plurality of tiles each having a size less than a threshold size.

29. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the retrieving further ~~dividing~~ comprises dividing each of the at least two digital images at the second resolution level into a plurality of tiles each having a size less than a threshold size.

30. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 17, wherein the dividing comprises retrieving further ~~dividing~~ each of the at least two digital images at the second resolution level into a plurality of tiles each having a size less than a threshold size.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 25, wherein the dividing means comprises means for dividing each of the at least two digital images at the second resolution level into a plurality of tiles each having a size less than a threshold size.

Claims 32-43 (Cancelled)